

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: ACT/NSW COVID-19 and Best Practice Meeting

Videoconference – 16 November 2021

On 16 November 2021, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held a videoconference for CoP members in the ACT and NSW to share their best practice and innovative service delivery, along with challenges faced, particularly in view of the changes in COVID-19 restrictions and the vaccination program roll-out.

Vaccination program roll-out and COVID-19 safety

Attendees noted the high levels of vaccinated clients in some areas and flagged the following sector initiatives that supported the vaccine roll-out and COVID-19 safety in the community:

- Resources were developed to assist clients with downloading their vaccine certificates
- Collaboration among service providers enabled the development of videos for the Congolese community while engaging bicultural/bilingual workers to assist with information on changed restrictions in Albury-Wodonga
- Young people from the community were engaged at settlement service centres to provide support to clients, particularly older clients, with accessing MyGov and vaccination certificates
- Clients were provided with culturally appropriate food
- Connecting with clients outdoors in gardens continues to be successful.

Impacts of restrictions easing on settlement services

Some organisations are now offering face-to-face or online service options, while others are preparing to reopen on 15 December or in the new year. Programs which were on hold during lockdown have now been able to restart. Some group sessions are being delivered face-to-face again where organisations have large rooms and COVID-safe practices in place, other groups are happy to continue online. Many local government-owned facilities, where group sessions are traditionally held, require all visitors to be vaccinated, preventing some clients from participating.

Challenges faced in relation to vaccinations and changes in restrictions

Some clients are still hesitant to make inquiries face-to-face and are not fully engaged, keeping them somewhat isolated. There is a degree of anxiety among clients, particularly parents, who are unsure about who is fully vaccinated.

Some service providers are still confirming their policies for servicing clients who are not vaccinated, while others have clear guidelines due to funding received from bodies with specific vaccination requirements. Providers that have a policy of only assisting clients who are double-dose vaccinated still try to ensure that everyone who needs assistance is able to access it.

When doing outreach in different locations, there are differing COVID-19 policies and procedures to follow, which creates confusion for staff. For organisations in Albury-Wondonga, differing protocols for Victoria and NSW has been difficult to manage.

Shared Resources

Website for clients to book for digital support from younger people - <https://www.youngster.co/>